

HERALD DISPATCH 10-24-00

Corps must fix Jenkins house

Our view

At issue: Rep. Nick Rahall introduced a measure that would require the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to restore the historical Gen. Albert Gallatin Jenkins house.

We believe: We hope that the final bill approved by Congress will include the restoration of this piece of history.

What about you? Call 526-2796 and record your opinion.

When the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expanded the Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam on the Ohio River at Gallipolis, it was necessary to take a large tract of wetlands and wildfowl habitat for the project. By federal law, those wetlands and habitat had to be replaced with other property somewhere nearby, so the Corps bought an 836-acre tract at Greenbottom on the Ohio in Cabell County near the Cabell-Mason county line.

That was great news for those history buffs and others who long had worried about the fate of the Gen.

Albert Gallatin Jenkins house, located on that tract. Built in 1835, the Civil War general's home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

But dreams of a full-scale restoration of the handsome house quickly faded. The Corps undertook work to preserve the house, but the state Division of Culture and History has called that work inadequate.

Tirelessly promoted by the hard-working volunteer members of the Greenbottom Society, the house has become a tourist attraction for our area. But, unless it's restored to its one-time grandeur, the house will never come anywhere near fulfilling its tourism potential.

Now, thanks to the efforts of Rep. Nick Rahall, D-WVa., the House of Representatives has directed that the Corps act, not only to preserve but to restore the Jenkins house.

The directive is part of a House bill that still must be reconciled with its Senate companion. It's our hope that the final bill approved by Congress will include this important step to preserve and restore an important piece of our local history.